

Serial No. 10/736,131

Filed 12/15/2003

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**Amendment to the Claims**

Please amend claims 1, 8, 9, and 13, and add new claims 14 - 20 as indicated below:

1. (Currently amended) A ceiling hatch comprising:

a frame having an upper edge and a lower edge and a passage bounded by a sidewall passing therebetween, said passage extending from said lower edge to said upper edge and having its minimum cross section at said lower edge;

an insulating block bounded by a top surface, a bottom surface and a side surface which is configured such that said insulating block is positionable substantially within said passage and substantially fills the same, assuring that said side surface resides in close proximity to said sidewall of said frame, thereby impeding air flow between said side surface and sidewall;

a hinge operably attached to said frame and to said insulating block, providing pivotable action between said insulating block and said frame about a pivot axis,

said hinge being so positioned and said side surface of said insulating block and said passage through said frame being so configured as to allow said insulating block to be swung out of said passage on an interference free path; and

means for maintaining said bottom surface of said insulating block in a horizontal plane when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage.

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2. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 1 further comprising:

a rim mounted to said lower edge of said frame and extending outwardly therefrom to provide a flange.

3. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 2 wherein said means for maintaining said bottom surface horizontal is provided by a lip extending inwardly from said lower edge and formed by a portion of said rim, said lip serving to support said bottom surface of said insulating block.

4. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 3 wherein said passage has a rectangular cross section and is bound by a pair of parallel vertical sidewalls spaced apart and terminating at a vertical back wall and at a sloped front wall, and

further wherein said side surface of said insulating block is faceted and configured to provide a pair of parallel spaced apart side facets, a back facet, and a front facet, said facets being configured such that, when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage said side facets are each parallel to and in close proximity to one of said pair of parallel vertical sidewalls and said back facet is substantially parallel to and in close proximity to said vertical back wall, and said front facet being configured such that at least a portion thereof is in close proximity with said sloped front wall, and

still further wherein said hinge is aligned such that said pivot axis is parallel to said vertical back wall and to said back facet.

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5. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 4 further comprising:

weatherstripping positioned so as to form a seal between said frame and said insulating block when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage.

6. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 5 wherein said weatherstripping is positioned in close proximity to said upper edge of said frame and said top surface of said insulating block when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage.

7. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 6 wherein said weatherstripping is a folded strip of a resilient material.

8. (Currently amended) ~~The A~~ ceiling hatch of claim 1 comprising:

a frame having an upper edge and a lower edge and a passage bounded by a sidewall passing therebetween, said passage extending from said lower edge to said upper edge and having its minimum cross section at said lower edge,

wherein said passage has a rectangular cross section and is bound by a pair of parallel vertical sidewalls spaced apart and terminating at a vertical back wall and at a sloped front wall; and

an insulating block bounded by a top surface, a bottom surface and a side

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surface which is configured such that said insulating block is positionable substantially within said passage and substantially fills the same, further

wherein said side surface of said insulating block is faceted and configured to provide a pair of parallel spaced apart side facets, a back facet, and a front facet, said facets being configured such that, when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage said side facets are each parallel to and in close proximity to one of said pair of parallel vertical sidewalls and said back facet is substantially parallel to and in close proximity to said vertical back wall, and said front facet being configured such that at least a portion thereof can be mated with said sloped front wall, and wall;

a hinge operably attached to said frame and to said insulating block, providing pivotable action between said insulating block and said frame about a pivot axis,

said hinge being so positioned and said side surface of said insulating block and said passage through said frame being so configured as to allow said insulating block to be swung out of said passage on an interference free path, still further

wherein said hinge is aligned such that said pivot axis is parallel to said vertical back wall and to said back facet; and

means for maintaining said bottom surface of said insulating block in a horizontal plane when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage.

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9. (Currently amended) The ceiling hatch of claim 8 further comprising:

weatherstripping positioned so as to form a seal between said sidewall of said frame and said side surface of insulating block when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage.

10. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 9 wherein said weatherstripping is positioned in close proximity to said upper edge of said frame and said top surface of said insulating block when said insulating block resides substantially within said passage.

11. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 10 wherein said weatherstripping is a folded strip of a resilient material.

12. (Original) The ceiling hatch of claim 1 further comprising:

a block cap attached to said top surface of said insulating block and extending therebeyond so as to engage said upper edge of said frame when said bottom surface of said insulating block is substantially horizontal.

13. (Currently amended) The ceiling hatch of claim 1 wherein a pull handle is attached to said top surface of said insulating block said close proximity of said side surface to said sidewall is such that said side surface is separated from said sidewall by a distance of less than about 1/8 inch over a substantial portion of said side surface and

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said sidewall.

14. (New) The ceiling hatch of claim 1 wherein said insulating block is fabricated from a material providing a high R value.

15. (New) The ceiling hatch of claim 14 wherein said material providing a high R value is a polymer foam.

16. (New) The ceiling hatch of claim 15 wherein said insulating block further comprises:

a layer of fire retardant material attached to said polymer foam and forming said bottom surface of said block.

17. (New) The ceiling hatch of claim 8 further comprising:

a rim mounted to said lower edge of said frame, said rim residing below said passage and extending outwardly from said lower edge to provide a flange.

18. (New) The ceiling hatch of claim 17 wherein said means for maintaining said bottom surface horizontal is provided by a lip extending inwardly from said lower edge and formed by a portion of said rim, said lip serving to support said bottom surface of said insulating block.

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19. (New) The ceiling hatch of claim 1 wherein said frame has a height **H** of at least about 11 inches.

20. (New) The ceiling hatch of claim 8 wherein said frame has a height **H** of at least about 11 inches.